

PART II

FERRY COUNTY POPULATION

Geographically, the population of Ferry County is unequal in distribution and is sparse in density. Rugged topography has largely confined Ferry County settlements into two areas. The first area of population is between Republic and Danville along the Sanpoil and Kettle Rivers in the north-central part of the county. The other major area of settlement is found along the eastern boundary of the county on the lowlands adjacent to Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake and the Kettle River. Elsewhere, a few people reside in parts of the Colville Indian Reservation in the southern portion of the county. A few inhabitants are also located in the northwestern corner of the county centered on Toroda. Other parts of Ferry County are nearly void of people.

Population Growth

The growth of the area now occupied by Ferry County was slow before the middle of the nineteenth century. Lack of roads and distance from eastern markets kept immigration to a minimum. Early settlers were discouraged by rugged terrain, dense forests, harsh climate and Indian hostility.

Population of the area began to grow more rapidly with the settlement of local British-American territorial claims and as the relationship between the Indian and white man improved. Mineral discoveries in the Okanogan Highlands during the 1890's brought many people into the northeastern sections of Washington State. Local agriculture developed to support the mining population. The construction of railroads into the area around the turn of the century gave further impetus to the settlement and expansion of the recently created Ferry County. The county population in 1900 was 4,562.

Ferry County's population continued to grow between 1900 and 1920, accompanying increased mining activities. A peak of 5,143 persons was reached in 1920. Since then, the county population has declined resulting from the decrease in mining and general migration of rural youth out of the area. A slight increase in the county population occurred in the decade between 1930 and 1940 as employment opportunities became available in the Grand Coulee Project which was undertaken by the Federal government during this period. The completion of Grand Coulee Dam and related construction projects caused some loss of county population as people moved to look for other employment. The inundation of land by the creation of the reservoir behind the great dam also forced some rural persons in the area to settle elsewhere. After 1940, the population dropped from 4,701 to 3,889 persons in 1960. In 1960, Ferry County ranked thirty-sixth in population among the 39 counties of Washington.

Urban and Rural Population

The population of Ferry County was classified as entirely rural by the U. S. Census in 1960. Since its creation, Ferry County has had no city with a population of 2,500 or over, which the Census considers urban. The largest and only incorporated place in the county in 1960 was the city of Republic. It originated as a miner's settlement and was later established as the county seat. Its population grew and remained relatively stable until 1930 when its population reached a low of 710 inhabitants. Since then, however, the city has increased to 1,064 persons

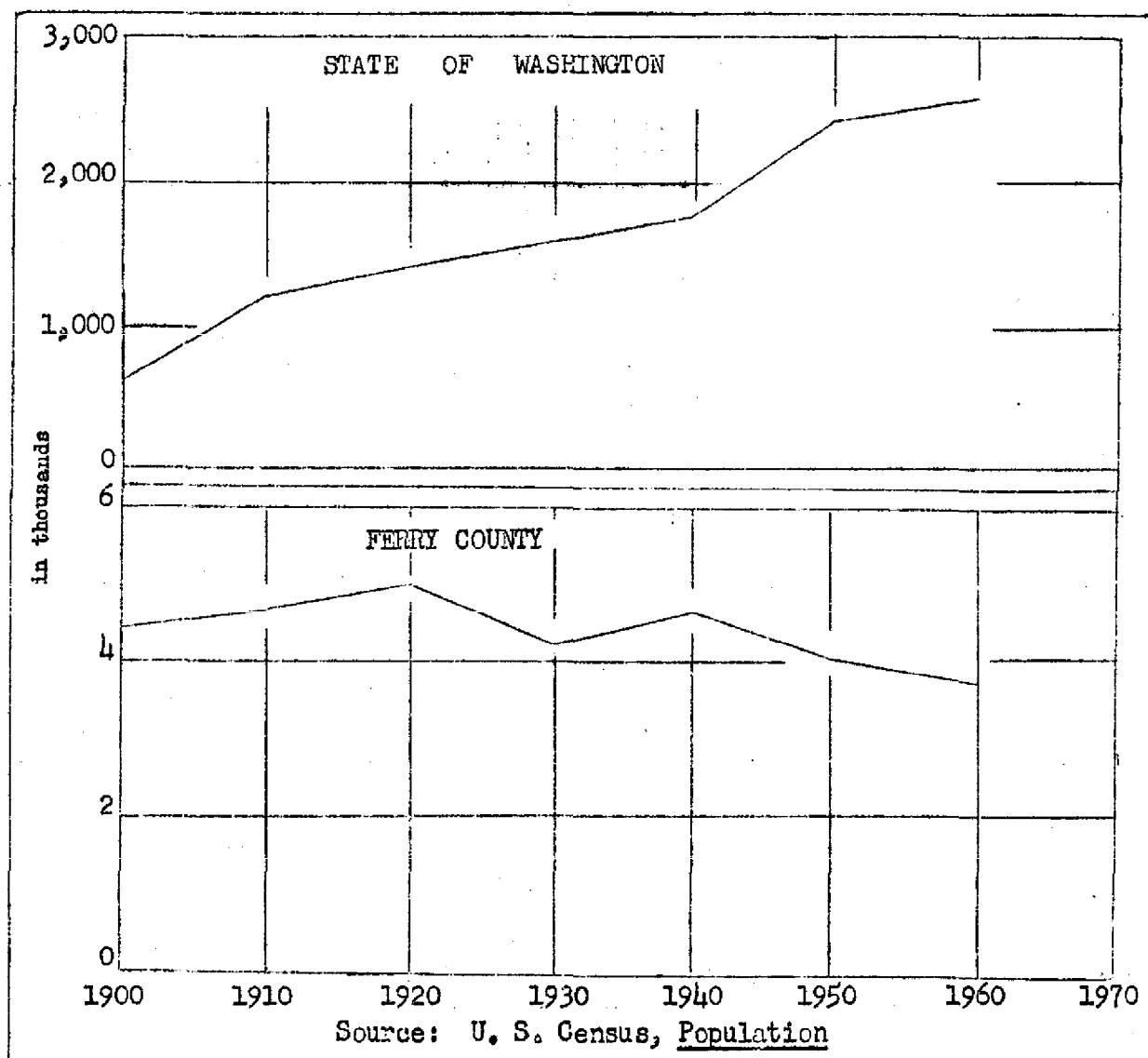


Figure 1. Population Trends: 1900-1960

Table 2. Population of Ferry County, 1900-1960

Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1900	4,562	100	0
1910	4,800	100	0
1920	5,143	100	0
1930	4,292	100	0
1940	4,701	100	0
1950	4,096	100	0
1960	3,889	100	0

Source: U. S. Census, Population

in 1960. The residents of Republic represented 27 percent of the total county population in 1960.

In 1960, Ferry County's rural population was predominantly rural-nonfarm, consisting of 3,092 persons who lived in small settlements or in the country but not on farms. Most of the rural-nonfarm population lived in Republic or in 23 other unincorporated settlements in the county which range in population up to 250. The 1960 rural-nonfarm persons represented 79.5 percent of the total county population. The general trend in rural-nonfarm population over the years has been upward. Between 1930 and 1960, it increased 66 percent in Ferry County. Rural-farm population in the county, on the other hand, has decreased steadily since 1930. Persons living on farms numbered 2,423 in 1930, 2,361 in 1940, 1,780 in 1950 and 797 in 1960. In 1960, persons residing on farms represented 20.5 percent of the total county population. Also in the same year, Ferry County ranked thirty-fifth among the counties of Washington in farm population. Production of farm goods in Ferry County has continued to increase although both farms and people living on farms have become fewer since the 1930's.

Population Characteristics

Mining and other opportunities in Ferry County have attracted settlers of varied origins and backgrounds. In 1920, over 12 percent of the inhabitants was foreign-born. After 1920, many of the foreign-born miners left the county and those coming into the area became fewer. The proportion of foreign-born persons in the county by 1950 was about 4 percent. Most of the foreign immigrants came from Canada. Scandinavians were the second largest group and Germans, English, Scotch and Irish were also prominent. Many Europeans who came to Ferry County took up homesteads and contributed much to the area's agriculture.

The nonwhite population of Ferry County was 708, according to the Census of 1960. The races included 703 Indians, three Negroes and two Japanese. The Indians, who account for about 18 percent of the total county population, live mostly on the Colville Reservation in the southern part of Ferry County where raising livestock is the primary agricultural activity. The Indians of the county are related to the Okanogan, Spokane, Nespelem and Sampoil language groups.

Table 3. Employment of the Population
Ferry County, 1960

Types of Employment	Total Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	1,247
Agriculture	278
Forestry and Fisheries	21
Mining	69
Construction	68
Manufacturing	331
Transportation, Communications and other Public Utilities .	61
Retail and Wholesale Trade . .	153
Miscellaneous Services	166
Public Administration (govern- ment employment)	84
Other employment	16

Source: U. S. Census, Population

In 1960, a total of 1,247 persons were employed in the county. Manufacturing of lumber and wood products is the most important type of employment in Ferry County. According to the Census figures, 331 or about 26 percent of all self-employed and employed persons were in manufacturing. Agriculture was second in employment. Farm activities involved the labor of 278 individuals or 22 percent of the county's total number of persons employed in 1960. The next largest field of work was in the miscellaneous services covering many trades. Work in wholesale and retail establishments was fourth as a source of wages. Mining and construction work, formerly important in the area, were among the minor occupations in 1960.

According to the 1930 Census, there were 127 males per 100 females in Ferry County. In 1960, Ferry's population consisted of 2,080 males and 1,809 females, which was a ratio of 115 males per 100 females. The number of women relative to men tends to increase as the county becomes older and more settled. Other factors such as war and industrialization also tend to increase the proportion of women.

Ferry County's population is slowly aging. The percentage of older people has been increasing steadily since 1870. The 1930 Census showed only 6.9 percent of the people in the county were 65 and over, whereas in 1960, they accounted for a slightly higher figure of 8.1 percent of the total. Improved health practices and greater medical knowledge have played an important part in lengthening the life span. In 1960, the largest single age group was that of children up to 4 years of age. Children 5 to 9 years of age formed the second largest group while those between 10 and 14 years were third. Young people under 15 years of age accounted for over 35 percent of the county's population.

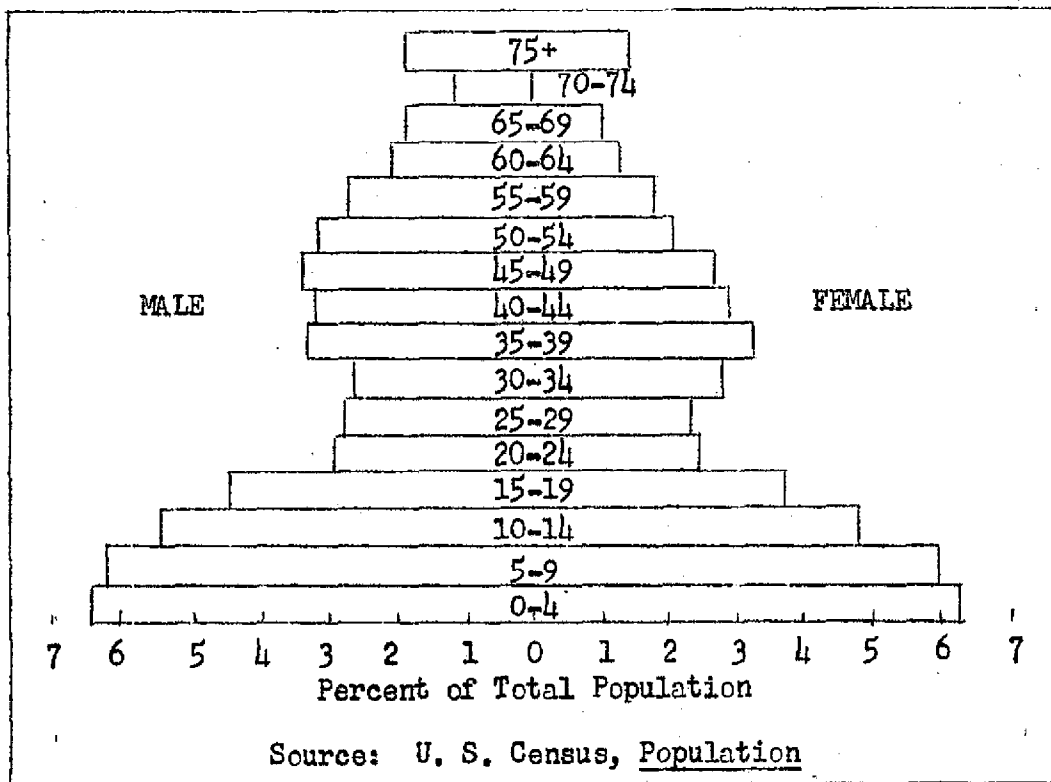


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Population, Ferry County, 1960